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Course Syllabus
SOC2251, Social Problems: *Online Course*
Kennesaw State University
Spring 2014

Required Text:

The course uses one major textbook: **Social Problems**, 4th edition, John J. Macionis, New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2011, which is available at the campus bookstore. Everyone in the course is required to purchase a copy of this text. It is the responsibility of the student to have the book before the course starts. *Missed assignments based on not having a book, is not considered a legitimate excuse.*

Course Content Description:

This course serves as an introduction to social problems and their solutions. This course will discuss the nature of these problems and the different approaches sociologists have taken to unraveling them. Among the issues reviewed will be alcohol and drug abuse, crime and violence, family relations, sexuality, gender differences, race and ethnicity, and wealth and poverty. Students will be encouraged to develop their own points of view.

The academic discipline of Sociology encompasses analysis of a wide array of social issues, from a diversity of perspectives. Both of which are as potentially complex as society itself. The goal is to critically engage the problems and it is recommended that students attempt to think about how each theory and issue relates, or does not relate, to their own lives and experiences. This way, everyone can determine for themselves the relevance and effectiveness of sociology as a framework for understanding our social world.

Prerequisites:

Undergraduate Semester level SOCI 2201 Minimum Grade of D

What You Need to Succeed in this Class:

- Log into class on a daily basis to check email updates and respond accordingly, if required.
- Strong time-management skills to submit assignments in on time.
- Understanding that online courses require self-motivation and time to complete course challenges.

Learning Objectives

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Analyze various sociological topics and issues using the sociological framework while developing a vocabulary of sociological terms.
- 2) Identify the unique features that make a problem a “social” one by applying the themes of the discipline of Sociology.
- 3) Evaluate and examine the role of diversity within social relationships and the influence of social structure on values and ideas.
- 4) Identify the relationship between social issues covered in the course and global cultural influences.
- 5) Apply critical thinking and written communication skills by demonstrating one’s own analysis concerning social problems and recognizing how individual behaviors relate to social responsibility.

Minimum Technology Requirements, Course Strategies and Methods

This is an entirely online course and will be conducted entirely through Desire 2 Learn (D2L). Students are expected to have the necessary computer background to work in this format, and are advised to seek additional technical assistance from computer services if needed [See resource links in Welcome Module]. Students will also need the MS PowerPoint viewer. If you need to download a viewer please click [HERE](#).

Students will be expected to read each assigned chapter carefully, and then use the linked Lecture Notes, PowerPoint presentations and weekly Internet Activities as review material. Then, for each chapter, students will be expected to make at least **2 substantive dialogue contributions** to ongoing discussions that will occur online. (Please see grading rubric for stringent discussion post requirements.) In addition to discussion, there is also assigned weekly Internet Activities. Discussion and weekly Internet Activities will be graded and posted on the online grade book within 2 weeks of the date they are due.

The assigned chapters will be grouped together into quarterly modules of several chapters each, and after each module there will be a short online exam. These will be two short quizzes, and a somewhat longer mid-term and final exam.

Email within D2L will be our other form of communication. I will email everyone with important updates and general comments, and students can always contact me in this way. Expect responses within 48 hours (2 business days) of your email or phone call. I do not check messages or email on weekends so please be aware that I will only answer queries Monday through Friday.

Exam Schedule and Format

Please make a note of the exam schedule and plan accordingly. After each exam is completed, the next Module [or quarter section] of the course will be opened in D2L. Exams are essentially open book; students can take them wherever they can log on to a high-speed computer. But study and preparation are necessary because the exams are *timed* and the clock starts as soon as you begin, so there will not be time to look up answers. You must be prepared in advance to do well on the tests. Quizzes will contain 25 questions, while the Midterm and Final will have 50 questions. Quizzes will be allotted 20 minutes, and the Midterm and Final will be allotted 45 minutes. The questions asked in exams will primarily cover the major issues and concepts covered in the text, as opposed to obscure dates, individual places and names, or the most briefly discussed concepts. The first quiz and the Midterm will provide feedback for students as the course gets underway. It is important to note students are not allowed to communicate with one another regarding the quizzes or exams. If you are not doing well, please email to discuss the situation. If I think you are doing poorly, I will email you to discuss.

Quiz 1: **January 31**

Mid-Term: **February 28**

Quiz 2: **March 21**

Final: **April 28**

Exam Study Assistance

To help you prepare for exams, the textbook has a useful website with a host of exercises to help you study: www.prenhall.com/macisionis. The website includes sample multiple choice quizzes, internet exercises, flashcards and even crossword puzzles with key terms from each chapter. Check it out!

On-line Discussion/Participation Requirement- (200 points)

1. The first participation will be Student Introductions, the Discussion Thread for which will be found in Start Here/Welcome Module. Instructions will be found at the top of the Discussion Thread, and this will take the place of the typical in-class go-around introductions.
2. Students are required to participate in the discussion threads for each chapter as we proceed through the syllabus, with a minimum of **TWO posts** for each chapter, and more encouraged. This is the best way for you to ask questions, make comments, clarify things, and especially to demonstrate that you have read and understood the chapters. **It is important to note that you must create an original post and reply to at least one other thread in order to get credit for your two substantial posts. This must be completed first, otherwise you will not receive credit for your two substantial post requirement.** The instructor will post a discussion question(s) each chapter/week. The discussions will be multi-directional: student-student, student-content, student-instructor, and instructor-student from past experience, more than 1000

postings will likely be made by students during our term, and the instructor will reply to about 10% of the total postings, often engaging a whole thread at one time.

3. Students are asked to read available newspapers, local or national/international, and/or credible websites and connect with sociological themes being covered at that time in our textbook. A minimum of **one time per week**, students need to cite a news story in their discussion posts, explaining the story they saw, how it relates, and also providing the citation for the news story: name of publication, date, page number [or website address].

4. Because participation is crucial in an online environment, if 3 or more Discussions and/or Internet Activities (IA's) are not completed by the end of the semester, this will result in a deduction of one letter grade (of your final grade). *Please remember that late assignments are not accepted.

A total of 200 points of your grade will be determined by this online course participation as a partial measure of individual work on the readings. The instructor is more interested in the content and substance of comments, than their length. In fact, extremely long postings should generally be avoided, as it is expected that everyone in the class will read all the postings as they develop into a large group conversation. Instructor will get statistics of how many postings each student reads, how many posts are made, and how many hours are spent on the site. Basic grammar should be taken into account; spell checking and proof reading are always a good idea. Consult the Writing Center [see: Links Page in Welcome Module] for assistance with writing. But content will remain foremost for assessment purposes. Opinions expressed are open to you and your personal creativity and perspective. These discussions are, by definition, subjective, so rather than grading based on right-or-wrong, the instructor will evaluate your discussion postings for consistency of engagement, depth of analysis, engagement with chapter concepts, and engagement with other students in the discussions. Please see grading outline below for details.

Discussion Grade Rubric:

The professor will grade the discussion assignments based on eight criteria: deadline, number of entries, depth of answer, use of additional resources, grammar and spelling, academic value, evidence of reading, and overall excellence. The rubric (table) below presents the level of performance required for each letter grade designation.

GRADE VALUE	Exceptional (12-14.3 pts.)	Acceptable (8-11 pts.)	Marginal (4-7 pts.)	Needs Improvement (1-3 pts.)	Zero grade value (0 pts.)
DEADLINE	All entries before deadline and were 250 words each while, spaced out evenly	All entries before deadline and the entries were not all made on the same date.	All entries before deadline	All entries before deadline	Entries not before deadline

	enough during the discussion to allow two-way interaction between the student and others in the class.				
NUMBER OF ENTRIES	Two entries for the topic responding not only to the professor's question (or the assigned learning goal) but also to other students	Two entries for the topic responding not only to the professor's question (or the assigned learning goal) but also to other students	At least one entry for the topic responding to the professor's question (or the assigned learning goal)	At least one entry	No entry
DEPTH OF ANSWER	The question was answered completely and all aspects of the topic were addressed thoroughly.	The question was answered completely and all aspects of the topic were addressed satisfactorily.	The student addressed most of the question satisfactorily.	The answer was incomplete but addressed more than half of the question.	The answer addressed less than half of the question or simply stating, "I agree or disagree".
RESPECT FOR FELLOW STUDENTS	Posts demonstrate mutual respect when agreeing or disagreeing and asking open-ended questions to broaden discussion.	Posts demonstrate mutual respect when agreeing or disagreeing and asking open-ended questions to broaden discussion.	Posts demonstrate mutual respect when agreeing or disagreeing.	Posts demonstrate mutual respect when agreeing or disagreeing.	Lack of respectful consideration of classmates' opinions.
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES INCLUDED	At least one post includes links to additional	At least one post includes links to additional	At least one post includes links to additional	No links or additional resources included.	No links or additional resources included.

	resources on the topic and replies expand upon classmates contributions.	resources on the topic and replies expand upon classmates contributions.	resources on the topic and replies expand upon classmates contributions.		
GRAMMAR AND SPELLING	No errors	One error	Very few errors	Many errors	Excessive errors made it difficult to understand or to evaluate.
ACADEMIC VALUE	Almost all of the writing had academic value	Much (more than 70 percent) of the writing had academic value	Some (more than half) of the writing had academic value	Little of the writing had academic value	No academic value
EVIDENCE OF READING	The writing demonstrated that the student had completed almost all or all of the assigned reading.	The writing demonstrated that the student had completed much the assigned reading.	The writing demonstrated that the student had completed some (more than half) of the assigned reading.	The writing failed to demonstrate that the student had completed or understood the assigned reading	No post was made or no evidence of learning was demonstrated in the post.
Word Count	250 words each posting	250 words each posting	250 words each posting	Less than 250 words each posting	Less than 250 words each posting
OVERALL EXCELLENCE	The student's comments or questions demonstrated critical thinking and a college level understanding (perhaps an emerging understanding) of the topic.				

Additional Reminders for Discussion:

Substantive posting is demonstrated through the following:

- Encourage additional discussion by asking follow-up questions so that your fellow classmates think more deeply. Adding more than just "I agree" or "I disagree."
- Share your own experiences in relationship to the topics being discussed.
- Suggest other solutions; constructively disagree at times.
- Refer to course readings; apply these course readings; ask your fellow classmates how they are applying the course readings or their understanding of the course readings.
- Demonstrate your content knowledge in relationship to our discussions.

Questions are encouraged, and polite disagreements are fine. However, *respect is a basic necessity in all online interactions*. According to KSU Computer Usage Policy and Guidelines [www.kennesaw.edu/infosec]: You may not employ lewd or threatening language in any electronic communication. This would violate the bounds of good taste as well as laws and regulations. Please see the Etiquette Statement in the Welcome Module for a more detailed discussion.

Weekly Internet Activities- (100 points)

You will be required to do the weekly Internet activity provided at the end of each chapter. The weekly Internet activity will include an exercise on the web that will demonstrate what you learned from the chapter for that week. All Weekly Internet assignments are worth 7 or 8 points total each week.

Internet activities are to be submitted via the appropriate D2L course drop box. Weekly Internet activities are **due every Saturday by 12 midnight (EST)**. **Late assignments will not be accepted.** They will be graded and your grade will be posted on the online grade book within 2 weeks.

DisAbled Student Services Statement

Kennesaw State University welcomes all students, recognizing that variations of abilities contribute to a richly diverse campus life. A number of services are available to help students with disabilities with their academic work. In order to make arrangements for special services, students should visit the disAbled Student Support Services office and/or make an appointment to arrange an individual assistance plan. For more information, visit the office website at: http://www.kennesaw.edu/stu_dev/dsss/dsss.html, or navigate to the Links Page in my Welcome Documents on the course homepage. Please contact the instructor directly with any questions or concerns you may have, using either the D2L email platform within the course, or the instructors direct email address listed at the top of this syllabus.

Website Links

Item 6 in the Welcome Documents Folder on the courses Homepage is a list of useful links you may refer to throughout the semester. These include links to: disAbled Student Services, the Department of Sociology, KSU Financial Aid, the Counseling Center [CAPS], computer Tech Support, the Writing Center, KSUs Student Code of Conduct, and the Student Development Center.

Grading Formula:

Online Discussion (20%)	200 points
Weekly Internet Activities (10%)	100 points
2 Short Quizzes (10%)	100 points (per quiz)
Mid-Term (25%)	200 points
<u>Final (35%)</u>	<u>300 points</u>
Total	1000 points

How to figure your final grade:

Grading Scale

You can earn a maximum of 1000 points in this class. The thousand points will then be converted into a letter grade based on Niagara's grading scale.

Final Grade Scale:

A- 900 -1000 points

B- 800-899 points

C- 700-799 points

D- 600-699 points

F- below 600 points

Student Responsibility

I am here to teach, to motivate, and to assist you in learning the basics of sociology and social problems. As students, you also have a crucial role in your learning and success. An online course covers a fair amount of material. If you have questions or difficulty regarding the material, you should see me as soon as possible- early in the semester. Please do not wait until a few days before the final exam to discuss your progress- it will then be too late!

I suggest you use resources on campus for improving your reading and note-taking skills. The KSU Writing Center in Humanities/Room 242 will assist you with written assignments.

ACADEMIC HONESTY (CHEATING)/PLAGIARISM POLICY- Cheating/Plagiarism Policy: Cheating and plagiarism are both against Kennesaw State University policy. Cheating includes any attempt to defraud, deceive, or mislead a professor in arriving at an honest grade assessment. Plagiarism is a form of cheating that occurs when you present the work of others as your own ideas. When materials from sources outside your own brain are used to create documents, you must cite your sources of information using appropriate in-text and end-of-the-text references in the American Sociological Association (ASA) format.

Incidents of cheating and/or plagiarism will result in a grade of “F” for the assignment, and may result in your being assigned a grade of “F” for the entire course. A failing grade assigned to you because of an alleged cheating policy violation may be appealed through the appeals process of the college. See the Student Conduct Code for details. I recommend that you become familiar with this code.

Flexibility Statement: All assignments and calendars may change in response to institutional, instructional, or weather needs. Changes in assignments may affect the number of total points available in the course.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT STATEMENT

If you are a student who is disabled as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act and requires assistance or support services, please seek assistance through the Center for Disability Services. A CDS Counselor will coordinate those services.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

No person shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, religion, creed, national origin, age, or disability, be excluded from employment or participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity conducted by KSU.

STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

Kennesaw State University supports the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order #11246, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. No person shall, on the basis of age, race, religion, color, gender, sexual orientation, national origin or disability, be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity of the college. Any individual with a grievance related to the enforcement of any of the above provisions should contact the Assistant Director of Human Resources, Ombudsperson.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION STATEMENT

Kennesaw State University adheres to affirmative action policies to promote diversity and equal opportunity for all faculty and students.

WEEKLY READING SCHEDULE

On or before **January 8:**

Welcome E-mail from course Professor. Read all materials and complete discussion (student introduction) all within the "Start Here-Welcome Documents Module". Sufficient time is allotted to read all course information, you are expected to be familiar with course policies, format and getting acquainted exam. *Chapter 1 must be read before January 13th.*

MODULE ONE

Chapter 1: SOCIOLOGY: Studying Social Problems

January 13, Pgs. 1-25

Chapter 2: Poverty & Wealth

January 20, Pgs. 26-53

(Jan 20th is a holiday- discussion will be open for those who want to start their work.)

Chapter 3: Race & Ethnic Inequality

January 27, Pgs. 54-85

QUIZ 1: January 31st

MODULE TWO

Chapter 4: Gender Inequality

February 3, Pgs. 86-113

Chapter 5: Aging and Inequality

February 10, Pgs. 114-139

Chapter 6: Crime, Violence and Criminal Justice

February 17, Pgs. 140-175

Chapter 7: Sexuality

February 24, Pgs. 176-205

MIDTERM EXAM---February 28th

MODULE THREE

Chapter 8: Alcohol and Other Drugs

March 3, Pgs. 206-233

Chapter 12: Family Life

March 10, Pgs. 316-339

Chapter 13: Education

March 17, Pgs. 340-365

QUIZ 2---March 21st

MODULE FOUR

Chapter 14: Urban Life

March 24, Pgs. 366-391

(Spring Break: March 29th- April 4th)

Chapter 15: Population and Global Inequality

April 7, Pgs. 392-417

Chapter 16: Technology and The Environment

April 14, Pgs. 418-439

Chapter 17: War and Terrorism

April 21, Pgs. 440-465

FINAL EXAM---April 28th

